

Sedona Community Plan Update Public Meeting
Imagine Sedona – 2020 & Beyond
Regionalism and Sedona's Growth Workshop
Jewish Community of Sedona and the Verde Valley
100 Meadowlark Drive, Sedona, AZ
Wednesday, September 14, 2011 - 6:00 p.m.

Public Participants (excludes those listed below): 11

Committee Members:

Chairman Jim Eaton, Vice Chairman Jon Thompson and Committee Members Mike Bower, Marty Losoff, Barbara Litrell, Elemer Magaziner, Gerhard Mayer, Judy Reddington, Rio Robson and John Sather
Councilors Dennis Rayner and Mike Ward

Councilors:

Commissioners:

Budget Oversight:

Housing:

Sustainability:

Guest Speakers:

Lin Ennis

Sandy Moriarty

Marlene Rayner

Tammy DeWitt, Senior Planner - Yavapai County and Heather Provencio,
District Ranger - U.S. Forest Service

Subject Matter Resources: Jodie Filardo, Mike Jenkins, Dorothy O'Brien, Bob Rothrock and Sarah Tomsy

Volunteers:

Staff:

Sandy Moriarty

Kathy Levin, John O'Brien, Donna Puckett and Mike Raber

INTRODUCTION:

The workshop began at 6:10 p.m. and Chairman Eaton welcomed the public and indicated that this is the first of several workshops on specific topics for the Sedona Community Plan. To date, the Committee has had some public meetings that yielded some brief ideas on what the people want, and now the Committee wants to get into more depth. Tonight, the subject is *Regionalism and Sedona's Growth*. There will be seven workshops and we hope to see you again. Bring your friends, especially the young ones, because it will be their future.

Mike Raber explained that the Community Plan is really our vision for the future. It tells us where we should and should not grow, and we need to update it not only because the State of Arizona mandates, but also because the conditions and opportunities change over time and priorities shift. As far as the planning process, we are kind of in an awareness phase and have spent the last few months listening to you, and we are now beginning to transition from the "Who are we, where are we now, and what are we now?" to finding out more about what we can be as a community and what our possibilities are for the future. Following these workshops, we will be looking at what we are hearing and what it means in terms of the community's values, priorities and goals. From there, we will look at alternative futures for the community and be actively engaging you again as we move toward creating a common vision together, and hopefully that will be by the middle of next year.

Mike indicated that the workshop themes have been based partly on what we have heard from you, partly on what we need to cover by state statute, and also to help us better understand what is going on around us too. Future workshops will focus on Community, Economy, Sustainability, Parks & Recreation, Housing and Transportation. Tonight, are focusing on growth and our region, so this is really the big picture of why regional awareness is important, how Sedona grows in the future, and how we fit into that picture of the region.

Mike pointed out that the National Forest surrounds us and makes up about 80% of the Verde Valley land, and within the past 13 years or so, several policies and resolutions to help protect that resource have been adopted by the Forest Service, cities and towns, and by the County's adoption of the Verde Valley Regional Plan. Tonight, two Citizens Steering Committee Members, Mike Bower and John Sather, will lead with some background on the significance of regional awareness, and then Heather Provencio,

District Forest Service Ranger, and Tammy DeWitt, Senior Planner for Yavapai County, will address what may be important for us to consider from their perspectives. Mike and John will also give an overview of the questions we will be discussing tonight, and then we will engage in round table discussions on those questions for about an hour. At the end, the recorder for each group will be summarizing the tables' discussions for the group, and we have invited a few others from our region to be here and help with questions. In addition to City staff, which includes himself, Kathy Levin, and John O'Brien, also present is Jodie Filardo, Planning Director and Economic Development Director for Clarkdale; Michael Jenkins, Planning Director for Camp Verde; Dorothy O'Brien, Past President of the Big Park Regional Coordinating Council and Chair of Communications for the Verde River Basin Partnership; and Bob Rothrock with the Verde Valley Land Preservation Institute. Mike also introduced Sedona City Councilors Dennis Rayner, Mike Ward and Barbara Litrell, who is also a member of the Citizens Steering Committee, and Mike expressed a special thanks to Rabbi Magal for the use of the facility.

PRESENTATIONS:

Mike Bower and John Sather:

Mike Bower thanked the members of the public for attending and explained that the Citizens Steering Committee consists of ten or eleven people. The City chose to not hire a consultant, but select members of the community, who are participants and volunteers as well, so we are guiding ourselves as we go and learning from you. We are here tonight to discuss why Sedonans should plan outside of our City limits.

John Sather referenced Mike Raber's outline of the planning process and indicated that to simplify that, we have been broadcasting a net for the various ideas people have and we have had it a little without structure. Now, we have put structure to this process, because we have to get going. We had the idea of making these generalized topics to focus on, rather than the whole ball of wax. In going from the general to the particulars, let's go to the regional view and look at what our neighboring communities do for us and what we do for them, and what we can do to create certain kinds of partnerships, so we create a more regional aspect to one part of our Plan. Some of the other workshops will consider various specific things within the City, but tonight is a more general and regional thought.

Mike Bower showed a drawing from the previous Community Plan effort that identified the City of Sedona boundaries, and Mike explained it is looking at an area of influence that used to be Sedona prior to incorporation. Mike also pointed out the Village of Oak Creek, Oak Creek Canyon and Loop Road area and indicated all of that is still considered Sedona and certainly outside of the City's boundaries, but it is kind of a start as to why we need to think outside of our boundaries, because those influences are obvious.

In another picture of the Sedona area, Mike pointed out 89A to Cottonwood and a boundary that the Interagency Working Team chose in 1992 that still included the Village, etc. Mike then showed Sedona's real region with the neighboring communities of Camp Verde, Cottonwood, Clarkdale, Page Springs, Cornville and Rimrock, plus the undeveloped state land that is a topic for discussion at the regional level. Another drawing that is part of the current Community Plan showed the planning boundary for regional thinking established in our Plan, which included all of the neighbors as it should, because when we think about why plan outside of our boundaries, one thing the Committee has talked about is that there are a lot of things that our community needs, and if we try to be all things to ourselves, often times it doesn't work.

John Sather indicated that one thing we are here to ask ourselves as a community is how inward we want to be. Do we want to be a very protectionist community where we try to do everything for ourselves or a community like the town of Paradise Valley in the middle of Phoenix that only allows residential and some fine resorts and has everybody else take care of all of their nasty land uses they don't want, like gas stations and big box stores, etc., so they can live on their nice large lots, or is there a balance that we should achieve? We are in an era of needing to do more with less and are there regional partnerships? There are a lot of regional agencies and entities that watch over the big sphere, but we are really trying to determine what this community says about how we really want to participate in the region? How much do we want to create those alliances?

John Sather then referenced the following list of possibilities or requirements that allow us to live in Sedona, but depend on the region.

- Roads - road don't stop at our borders
- Water - water doesn't just miraculously get created in Sedona and the supply, storage, quality and conservation aren't only our issues, they are bigger more regional issues. They are obviously being dealt with in various ways, but we are here to decide what role this community wants to play.
- Wastewater - we know how we dispose of wastewater internally
- Recycling/ land conservation/preservation
- Shared Services - this is kind of under the theory of doing more with less
- Regional Vision - A more holistic vision of what the whole Verde Valley wants to be; we have tried to nurture that through the years.
- Education - Education doesn't stop at our borders, especially as it gets to the higher levels
- Fire Protection
- Housing
- Jobs - Job creation
- Joint Economic Opportunities - This a real key that a lot of other regions get together on to say that one region may have the land, but not the resources and vice versa, so there is a more regional approach to those thoughts
- Air Quality
- The Arts
- Transportation
- Flood control
- Power Generation - A kind of futuristic idea of power generation where there is thinking about more regional, smaller plants specific to wind and solar primarily.

John Sather explained these are things that are more regional, not things like we want one road to connect to another road in Sedona, that part will come later; these are the more holistic things. Mike Bower then introduced Heather Provencio and explained that she is going to present her thoughts on what we might want to consider regionally.

Heather Provencio, District Ranger, U.S. Forest Service:

Heather thanked everyone for having the Forest Service be part of this process, and explained that it is important to the Forest Service. You saw from the maps that the area of influence includes a lot of National Forest, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers and all kinds of special places.

Heather indicated that the Forest Service at Coconino is also going through a plan revision and they have been working with the City, so the plans will mesh together well. It is important, because the Forest Service influences the City and the City influences the Forest Service. A lot of their interests are influenced by public participation and Amendment 12 was the last time they specifically talked about this area around Sedona, but they have some pretty clear direction in that as far as how they want to manage the area.

Heather indicated that Mike had asked her to share the things that the Forest Service would like for the City to consider and she will start with Transportation. Sedona has 3 to 4 million visitors annually and about 1.5 million of those recreate on National Forest land. They only have so many portals into the National Forest, so some of those parking lots can only handle so many people and on busy weekends that is problematic. They don't want parking lots all along the highways and private land. There is a reason they limit that, but at the same time they want to accommodate people coming to Sedona, so they are not frustrated. The Forest Service has been looking at if it makes sense to have a shuttle system; there was one that served businesses in town, but does it make sense to broaden that, so people could hop on a trail at one end of town and hike in one direction, pick-up a shuttle and make it back to a trailhead, or never drive their car anywhere at all to get to those trails? That would definitely necessitate a close working relationship with the City and they have already been talking with the City.

Heather also explained that the urban interface is a big issue for the Forest Service. The wilderness boundary is very interesting in Sedona, because there is not a lot of buffer between the City, with 4 million visitors, and the wilderness where you aren't supposed to have signs of people and you are supposed to have quiet and serenity, etc., so sometimes people are shocked that their experience in the wilderness isn't quite what they expected. As Sedona's plans, it would be good to think about that and provide those buffers and limit those interface impacts. Another thing they would like for the City to think about is, as new businesses and neighborhoods are planned, people like to access the National Forest from their backyards, but they end up with a plethora of trails and there are highly erosive soils that are very unique cryptobiotic soils. The Verde River has a turbidity problem, plus Oak Creek and the Verde River have a water quality problem, and with those cryptobiotic soils, once people have walked a few times over an area, a storm can take it to bedrock, so they are very concerned about how people are accessing the National Forest. They would like for that to be very directed if possible, so there aren't so many impacts.

Heather then referenced the City's marketing and explained that they understand the City depends on tourism -- 80% of the Operating Budget comes from tourism dollars and they appreciate that, but at the same time it is a little scary for the Forest Service, because they only have so many people to manage those impacts, so as the City thinks about the types of businesses and events, having a conversation with the Forest Service about their capacity to absorb some of the impacts from those events is important. There is a real balancing act between commercial use on National Forest land and non-commercial use, and during the Amendment 12 process, the public here said they wanted the Forest Service to cater to the non-commercial use, but there is an insatiable appetite from the business community for business opportunities on National Forest land, more than they can handle and more than the resource can handle, so there needs to be a lot of talking about that.

Heather explained that when it comes to infrastructure, such as utilities and planning for those in advance, it gets very controversial when the placement of things like water tanks, etc., are discussed, and thinking about future energy and where that might come from, people have been talking about wind generators, solar panels, etc., and public lands make a lot of sense for those uses, but they always try to think first about if you can do that on private land. Those public lands are for all of us in this nation and they want to think about preserving them for future generations. Once you put certain uses on those lands, there is really no turning back.

Tammy DeWitt, Senior Planner, Yavapai County:

Tammy indicated that the County is also in the process of updating their Comprehensive Plan; they have to add four new elements to the existing plan and one of them is the growth areas, and then they are also expanding their land use and looking at some of the same things as the Forest Service. Solar generating facilities are a hot topic right now and they receive lots of proposals; the preferred areas for them are really kind of limited. They just approved a big one on Yavapai Ranch, because that side is good for wind, but on this side, they haven't seen much from the wind maps; however, solar is one that they will probably see in this area, so something to look at is if there is an appropriate area close to Sedona.

Tammy indicated that renewable resources and green technology also are big topics, so where would it be appropriate to have the green technologies and renewable resources? Regarding a sustainable economy, in the past, the reliance has been on one type of industry, so what are other ones? Another hot topic from workshops in the Sedona area is to maintain wildlife corridors in the future. They know about where they are and they have a lot of maps and environmental data, so they want to ensure they maintain those corridors and provide for the wildlife, while ensuring they aren't impeding private property rights.

Tammy indicated that a lot of eco-tourism has been going on and they have a lot of agri-businesses coming into the area like the wine industry, so is that something the City of Sedona wants to tap into or allow it in the surrounding areas? Trails have also been a big issue in the Verde Valley; Sedona has one of the best trail systems in the area and the rest of the region is looking at how they can tie into the Sedona trail system to make it more of a regional expansion and connection for the area.

Tammy explained that the County has been starting to work on park and rec. sites; they have one possibly being planned off of Cornville Road that is a park and ride site/trailhead. It would have multiple

uses by hooking into a new Cornville trail system in addition to being used as a park and ride during the week, so they have to look for transportation ground for it.

Tammy indicated that regarding in-fill in the existing communities, there are places like Seven Canyons, Enchantment Resort, etc., in the outlying areas, but a lot of them like the Red Rock Loop Road area just want to maintain their rural feel, so how can they make sure the businesses are more in-fill development? They do understand that a lot of the lodging is going in the outlying areas, while promoting the Sedona area and providing alternative types of lodging.

Tammy indicated that one of the big things from a regional standpoint is alternative energy -- where they would want to see it and how big of a solar field, etc. Solar takes up a lot of land and uses water, so where would it be appropriately placed in the region, and that is something Sedona can look at too? Tammy then explained that the County is starting to write a draft and it will go out for public comment, hopefully in the next three to four months.

Mike Bower and John Sather:

Mike Bower indicated that if you don't plan regionally, you get these valleys -- in Denver, the Platte River Valley, or down by Phoenix, the Salt River Valley, or in California, the San Fernando Valley, etc., and we all know that is not our regional vision and the regional vision to date has focused on maintaining the unique character of each community with separation between the communities. Heather spoke a little about the overflow parking in the streets at trailheads, like off of Dry Creek Road, and Airport Mesa has an average of 300 people a day, so the concept of a shuttle where the Forest Service might actually interconnect all of the trailheads and vistas is something that is important to think about regionally, because the City boundary doesn't extend to the Village and Dry Creek Road, and the impact on the forest could be lessened.

Mike pointed out that transit has come up in every planning study and we find that each community needs to create a strong system within itself in order to make a valley-wide system feasible, or if we interconnected all of the communities with transit, when you got out, you couldn't make all of your side trips or do your business, so the system would limp a little bit, which is kind of where we are today. If each community as a region followed through with this as a vision, it might lead to something where part of those 3 million people wouldn't arrive by car.

John Sather added that if you look at our attempts at regional transit and compare them to Bar Harbor, Maine, they have the Acadia National Park and it is very similar to our communities. We have communities that aren't within a National Park; they are within the National Forest and they are linked, so there is a lot of interface with private land. It is an outrageously successful free transit program that is funded through private/public partnerships, and it is just one example of a model that works in a very similar terrain and community mix of public/private lands, so these are just things to consider and imagine for the future. Let's not get sidetracked by what was tried and didn't fully work; some of those things should be cast aside, but some of them maybe didn't have the right timing, energy or programs.

Mike Bower indicated that we are going to talk about three different questions in the discussions, and they are just starting points for discussion, but he and John thought they might go through them briefly to give you a little stimulation on each one:

- If Sedona grows, how will we grow in the future? - There is obviously this whole issue regionally, and when you think about growth, you think about population growth and physical growth. Initially the City of Cottonwood was exploring an idea for the state land that would have doubled the population of the Verde Valley, but with some feedback from residents they have scaled that back to a population of between 25,000 and 30,000 people for that land. That is still four times what the current zoning allows, but the current zoning is maybe just a holding zone -- it is all up for grabs and in your discussion, you can certainly talk about population, but there is also the ability to discuss other kinds of growth. Growth isn't always physical; you can grow in terms of your educational offerings, cultural aspects, etc., so this question is an opportunity to broaden a little past the obvious.

John Sather indicated he has often quoted that he looks at Sedona as being a teenager and actually Sedona hasn't grown -- its population has decreased slightly. Twenty years ago frightening numbers were thrown out, but we didn't achieve those numbers; however, that doesn't mean that people won't keep coming here, so the growth doesn't always mean that we are talking about new houses. It is can we grow more holistically as a community and think bigger thoughts? Can we think in more complex ways of living and doing more with less? Just like you judge your own personal growth, to us the word "growth" is beyond just rooftops.

Mike Bower indicated that the second question is:

- Explore what needs Sedona has that could or should be provided by other locations in our region - The car lots are tough to get on our terrain and we don't have any large acreage left, so those are already being provided elsewhere in our region. Tammy spoke about some of the things with sustainable and green, and we don't have a lot of arable land in Sedona or a lot of irrigated land. Mike then showed a picture of some irrigated land at a community garden at Crescent Moon Park; however, he explained that is a regional issue, because that is not in the City's boundaries. As we think about being sustainable, the real need for food production has to be met elsewhere, so is local food production a use that Sedonans are interested in having or would we want to drive somewhere to get the fresh food.

Mike then indicated that the third question is:

- What visionary projects could inspire collaboration and sharing amongst our neighboring communities? - We have heard about the whole issue with the visionary project of power generation, be it solar or wind, but there are some other ways to turn the question around and think regionally in general and specifically in Sedona.

John Sather indicated that the idea is some kind of more holistic, more regional cultural series of activities or linkages do more than if we just be very parochial about it and just think about ourselves. When you look at some of the great institutions like Chautauqua, they are located in a town, but it is speaking to a national audience and a very regional audience as well. There are people who live in that region because of Chautauqua and those are the more visionary kinds of programs. We have this unfortunate problem, but it is also a great opportunity, and that is the old Cultural Park that was Forest Service land and became private holdings and is now in not very good shape, and these are the kinds of things we need to explore with unique approaches to plans and more complex thinking than just a typical building and parking lot.

Mike Bower then suggested that the group breakout into their table discussions and Mike Raber explained that the regional experts can float around to the various tables and we essentially have one facilitator and one recorder for each table. Then, the recorder will provide feedback to the entire group on what was heard through the tables' discussions.

Participants' Breakout Table Discussions:

The participants began their breakout table discussions at 6:50 p.m. and concluded at 7:44 p.m.

Closing:

Jon Thompson:

Explained that we want each table's recorder to summarize what was discussed at the table and as the recorder for one table, Jon indicated that he would start. Jon explained that they talked about some housing issues, sustainability issues including hydroponic areas, and there were some specific things that ranged from needing to have a little more area for cemeteries when talking about growth, to big ideas of doing something like Bar Harbor, Maine. One thing we had some good nodding of heads about was on the general issue of if we are more interested in being a closed community and self-sufficient by taking care of our own needs or if we are more interested in working out a matrix concept with the other communities, to exchange things we can do better that they can rely on, while we continue to rely on things that they have. There was a lot of head nodding that the matrix idea was the better way to go. An example was affordable housing for example, there was some question about whether affordable housing really makes sense -- maybe we should allow other communities to supply us with the workers for some

of the lower paying jobs, because we supply a lot of other things to those communities in terms of culture and so forth.

Jon then indicated that he will summarize these comments and the Committee will get something on the website, so people can look at them later.

Mike Bower:

Indicated that he was sitting with a lot of the experts, so their table got into some detail and one of the things was that Tammy, the County representative, shared a lot of the projects that are pre-approved or sitting in the wings and not developing, and that was on the first growth question. There are some large ones; two hundred acres of Verde Santa Fe on the north side of the road, adjacent to the state land is one and we also talked about the Ruskin land trade that isn't really finished yet, but would have some huge implications in terms of development in the Valley. We also talked about the wine industry and how synergistically that could relate to some conservation of solid waste that would come from a composting system, and Sarah, a Forest Service person, shared an experience in San Francisco where they have a large composting effort and they sell a lot of the compost to the wine industry; the main benefit is that they greatly reduced their solid waste. They then discussed reduction and conservation as a concept that is hard to integrate into comprehensive planning, but is critical, like a water tank on forest land, do we really need to consume more water or can we figure out how to consume less water? That whole issue is the 100-lb. elephant in the sustainability camp.

Marty Losoff:

Indicated that in terms of growth, they had a discussion about economic stability and words like "living in place, aging in place, and growing in place" were used. In other words, keep the communities as they are and keep them going the same as they have been. The table also came up with the motto, "Remake, renew and refresh", and they talked about healthy senior citizen accommodations. When we talk about senior citizens, we are sometimes talking about the aging population and people who are sick, but a lot of seniors are pretty healthy, so we are talking about a variety of housing, which we don't have in Sedona, such as townhouses, condos, etc., for those who need to downsize their homes and move into some nice facilities. Also, the desire for a lot of pedestrian-friendly types of things to walk their dogs, ride their bikes, etc. was discussed. They talked about protecting the natural resources and making sure that the boundaries of forest lands and districts are kept as they are, and someone said "fiercely protect them".

Marty added that in terms of build-out and growth, they would like to maintain the current situation and protect our current neighborhood flavor, and if anything enhance our neighborhoods. They talked about planned communities and becoming a model for planned communities around the nation, so there are good neighborhoods, a unified approach to our City, and a nice common citizenship.

In terms of goods and services, they discussed how the Village can help and what we can provide back and forth. The Village can contract with the City of Sedona for various services, such as a library where we provide a library branch to them, and vice versa in terms of other services. In any case, they want to avoid duplication, so the Village and the City of Sedona aren't doing the same things, in terms of general services. The issue of employment also came up, where we provide employment for the Village and the Village provides employment for us, and in basic stores like the outlet shops, it would be great if there was a place for underwear and socks, etc., without having to go to Cottonwood or Flagstaff.

They also looked at fresh produce, agri-businesses, in terms of the Verde Valley, and maybe the vision for the Verde Valley would be to provide all of the fresh produce and agri-business to all of the communities, and taking their vision out further, they talked about becoming a model for planned communities and maybe establishing a major university outlet in Sedona, holding conferences, providing advanced degrees and using it as a magnet to bring in other services to the area, such as doctors, elevated educational programs, not just at the university level, but basic grammar and high school levels too. Additionally to bring businesses into town and become a magnet, they discussed becoming a high-tech corridor as we develop and grow our communities. They also discussed one County as opposed to being split between Yavapai and Coconino -- they didn't say which one, just one or the other.

Gerhard Mayer:

Indicated that his table had a lot of the same ideas and Michael Jenkins had some great ideas and offered to be the food basket for Sedona; they have all of that land, more than they can handle, because of the infrastructure, so he shared a little about their problems. The agri-tourism would be something, and he suggested sharing our tourists with the neighboring communities, so we spread it out and create less impact in Sedona on the trails, etc. Another topic was the transit system, which should extend to trails there as well, and a loop system between the Verde Valley communities. Another topic was healthcare, which is an opportunity to expand and bring more healthcare services to Sedona, like a Pediatrician is needed in Sedona. Another is the expansion of the college campuses from Yavapai College; we discussed a culinary institute, as well as a sustainability campus with NAU and possibly a green technology park at the sewer plant with pilot programs for biomass, solar, photovoltaic, building products, etc., and Sedona was titled the "Jewel of the Verde Valley". Sedona also has the ability to hold smaller conventions and seminars and that hasn't been explored much; we are lacking engineers to do that kind of thing and create a convention event office, to lengthen the visitors stay in Sedona. The average stay is only 1½ days, so we could have less impact with a better quality of tourism.

Jon Thompson:

Indicated that we have six more of these workshops; they may have a little different format, but they will follow basically the same kind of thing with as much audience participation as possible. We may vary them a little to get more background experts, if that seems appropriate. They will cover a variety of topics like housing, sustainability, parks & recreation, etc. Basically, there is one a week and pretty much every Wednesday at 6:00 p.m., except one is on a Tuesday. The official schedule is on the website, so be sure to plan to attend those. The next one a week from tonight will be at the West Sedona School at 6:00 p.m., and the subject is "Community". We are interested in building community or finding community or just deciding if we have one or if it has all moved to the Internet. Of the comments we have received so far, ones relating to that topic are the most in number with a lot of people talking about the plaza idea and the fact that we don't see enough of each other, so there are some real challenges in that and it will be a really good program, so please come back and encourage your friends to come as well.

Jon then explained the use and contents of the Imagine Sedona Community Planning Party-in-a-Box and encouraged participants to contact Kathy Levin in the Community Development office if they are interested.

Mike Raber:

Explained that several handouts are available and noted that two workshops have been rescheduled and the new schedule is on the handout, because the citywide mailing had a couple of errors. One is the Housing Workshop will be on October 26th and the Transportation workshop hasn't been scheduled yet, but it will be in mid-November. Originally those were going to be September 27th and 28th, so we don't have anything on those two dates.

The workshop ended at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna A. S. Puckett, *Recording Secretary*

Date